Under the Scheme 100% assistance is provided to the states for the procurement of modern hand tools, fire resistant clothing, fire finders, fire tenders, construction of watch towers, creation of fire lines, training and demonstration, research and publicity to enable the states for prevention, detection and suppression of forest fires.

Foreign Companies in Cellular and Basic Telecommunication Services

339. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several foreign companies are participating in the tenders issued by Government for the introduction of Cellular and basic telephone services in the country; and if so, the details thereof;

(b) which are the countries to which these companies bidding for telephone services belong; and

(c) whether Government would ensure that not only USA, Europe and Japan but some Asian countries also get a chance to participate in the development of modern telephone services in India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) Yes Sir. The Government has invited tenders for franchise of Cellular and Basic Telephone Services from registered Indian companies. In order to meet the eligibility conditions, the bidders have formed joint venture companies in collaboration with foreign companies. However, foreign equity in the bidder companies is limited to 49%.

(b) and (c) The countries to which the foreign companies bidding for telecom services belong are as follows:—

(I) **For Basic Telephone Services**

China, USA, Thailand, Malaysia, Netherland, Mauritius, Italy, Philliphines, Canada, Sweden, Israel, Japan, Germany, Australia, etc.

(II) **For Cellular Telephone Service**

USA, Thailand, Singapore, Israel, Mauritius, Canada, U.K., Italy, Phillipines, Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Kuwait, Korea, Germany, France, Hongkong, Malaysia, Australia, China, Netherland, etc.

From the above it may be seen that foreign companies belonging to countries other than USA, Europe & Japan have also participated in tenders for Basic and Cellular Telephone Services.

Restructuring of the DOT

340. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the department of Telecommunications is being restructured into three wings-India Telecom, Telecom Commission and the Telecom Regulatory Authority;

(b) if so, whether these wings are being set up by an act of Parliament to ensure their independence or under any administrative order; and

(c) the terms and conditions of these wings and the criteria to be adopted for the selection of Chairman/Members of the each wing?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) an exercise to restructure DOT for the purpose of distancing policy making, regulation and operational functions has been undertaken. It has been decided to constitute Telecom Regulatory Authority for regulating telecom services. It will be set up after the Indian Telegraph (Amendment) Bill, 1995 which has been introduced in Lok Sabha on 2nd June, 1995 has been passed by the Parliament.